

November 4, 2011

Weekly Views

Congratulations to Parole and Re-Entry Services Program Director Liz Johnson, who was recognized by Use What You've Got Prison Ministries (UWYGPM) for her commitment to offender re-entry and family wholeness. Liz served as guest speaker at the organization's annual dinner. UWYGPM is a 501(c) (3) charitable organization that offers shuttle service from Indianapolis to correctional facilities throughout the state to assist families who want to visit their incarcerated loved ones.

Indianapolis Parole District#3, Re-Entry Parole District#1, and Central Office Staff participated in Operation Safe Halloween for the eighth consecutive year to monitor paroled sex offenders during the

designated 'trick or treat' hours. The program is held in conjunction with Marion County Superior Court Probation Department, Marion County Community Corrections, and the Marion County Sheriff's Department -Sex and Violent Offender Unit to assist offenders with the responsibility to register as a sex offender and provide for a safer community during this traditional children's activity. From the three parole districts, only four offenders were arrested for registry or ID violations and one for a delinquency warrant.

Dave Wegner, Director of Cass/Pulaski County Community Corrections, received special recognition from Commissioner Lemmon for his work with IDOC parole staff. Any time the Department has needed help with a case, Director Wegner has been there to assist in any way he can. Recently, he provided an agent with office space to conduct visits and made his staff available at all times to assist the agent with difficult situations. When needed, he allows parolees to report any time of day to the Cass/Pulaski County Community Corrections building for drug tests, blood alcohol content tests, or for day reporting. Director Wegner has also acted as a liaison between the Cass County Courts and IDOC Parole Services, improving parole's relationship in Cass County.

Offenders at the Putnamville Correctional Facility received an early Christmas from Lemuel Vega's outreach ministry, Christmas Behind Bars. Offenders had the opportunity to attend a spiritual service, and 3,000 grocery sized bags filled with hygiene items and snacks were distributed to the offender population and staff.

Miami Correctional Facility (MCF) hosted a Straight Talk Program with 18 students from a Clinton Central High School Sociology Class. The students spoke with three offenders in the program about life in prison and their crimes, as well as staff members about what it is like to work in a prison. George Gilbert, the student's sociology teacher, said he enjoys bringing the students to the prison and giving them a view into a world they don't get to see. Gilbert has been bringing students to MCF for more than five years.

Madison Juvenile Correctional Facility held an anniversary celebration on November 3, 2011 to celebrate two years of operation. Staff were treated to refreshments for the anniversary celebration.

New Castle Correctional Facility Case Manager Mary Lowery coordinated an offender donation project to buy winter accessories for local school children. A total of \$650 was raised through offender donations which allowed for the purchase of 588 items that included gloves, hats & scarves.

Going green is saving green, as in taxpayer dollars at the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility. Physical Plant Director Roger Dagley showed local TV station WTHI a solar project being used to help heat water for showers in a housing unit at the facility. "We see less usage of our boiler system, a drop in natural gas usage, an abundance of hot water, and all around efficiency" Dagley told the news crew.

Branchville Correctional Facility hosted the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles' (BMV) mobile unit. Approximately 200 offenders were able to secure a State of Indiana ID. This program assists offenders in their re-entry by allowing eligible offenders to quickly renew or obtain a drivers license once released. Pre-release Director John Godare, along with two local Indiana BMV employees and one Central Office BMV employee, coordinated the event.

The Plainfield Correctional Facility raised \$218 for the Toys for Hendricks County Kids program. During the month of October, the Activity Committee sold Trick-or-Treat bags for \$1 and staff could send them to anyone they wanted. The money will go to help purchase Christmas presents for kids in Hendricks County who are less fortunate and who might not have a Christmas.

Pendleton Correctional Facility K-9 Handlers Sean Reger and Misty Stamper, with K-9 Kasey and K-9 Debo, recently graduated from the K-9 Advanced Aggression Academy conducted at the Correctional Training Institute. The training focused on obedience, handler protection, building and area searches, and crowd control.

A film crew from 3 Angels Broadcasting Network (3ABN) arrived at the Indianapolis Re-Entry Educational Facility (IREF) to interview residents for their new show, Free Indeed. The crew filmed the different aspects of prison life and the residents' testimonies about their religious journey and its effect on their incarceration. The IREF Men's choir was also filmed, and Lemuel Vega from the prison ministry Christmas Behind Bars spoke about the ministry's outreach program and items they deliver to Indiana prisoners each year. The interviews will air in segments as part of a series taking place later this season, and in early April 2012.